

RUTGERS - THE STATE UNIVERSITY

PUBLIC POLICY FORUM
on
CIVIL DISORDERS:
Causes and Remedies

Discussion Agenda
Discussion Group 2: SOCIAL WELFARE

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Welfare Services to Families and Children

A. Eligibility

Families

The presence of the father at home should not preclude assistance under Aid to Dependent Children;

Procedures should be simplified - presumptive eligibility should be instituted;

Clients should be permitted to retain a larger share of earnings before reductions are made in welfare;

Wage assignments and the garnishing of wages should be abolished.

B. Services

Children

Funds should be appropriated for a major expansion of child-care facilities, particularly in urban centers.

A program for day camps for children from disadvantaged areas should be provided and existing facilities should be used wherever possible or expanded.

There should be established neighborhood health centers, as an important element in improving health services in poor communities.

G. Education, Employment and Recreation Services for Youth

Major expansion is recommended for the Neighborhood Youth Corps for the summer. Urban coalitions and business communities in major cities should organize themselves to offer special summer job opportunities for youth and young adults;

"Street academies" should be set up in the summer to help youngsters into college and/or to assist them in accomplishing their next educational step.

D. State Services

The funding and administration of all public assistance programs in New Jersey should be centralized in one State agency.

FROM THE GOVERNOR'S MESSAGE

April 25, 1968

WELFARE

Because of such factors as the mobility of our population and new technologies, the welfare burden is truly national in character and requires a federal response. But until that response is forthcoming, we in New Jersey must either act or stand idly by while our cities and counties, and thus our local taxpayers, are crushed under the weight of skyrocketing welfare costs.

Effective July 1, 1968, the State assumes responsibility for payment of 75 per cent of the non-federal share of categorical assistance and 75 per cent of the cost of general assistance.

A proposal that the State assume 75 per cent of the non-federal welfare cost should not be interpreted as a denial of the merits of a complete State assumption of fiscal and administrative responsibility for welfare, which given sufficient revenue, could and should be instituted.

In order to ensure the most effective possible use of these released funds, all counties and municipalities that will realize in the forthcoming fiscal year a saving of \$50,000 or more from this program submit to the Committee a detailed statement of how these funds have been utilized.

The program improvements which I recommend are:

Legislation to permit families with dependent children to remain eligible for assistance if an unemployed father or under-employed parent resides in the home.

Revision of the State welfare law to authorize the introduction by county welfare boards of "presumptive eligibility."

Adoption of these recommendations will affect a substantial reduction in the public assistance burden of local property taxpayers; make our welfare system more humane and effective; and significantly increase the federal contribution to New Jersey's welfare costs.

From the Governor's Message...continued

WORK INCENTIVE PROGRAM

The 1967 amendments to the Social Security Act place upon the Department of Labor and Industry responsibility for the classification, preparation, training, and job placement of persons eligible for assistance under the AFDC program.

The Work Incentive Program will prepare AFDC recipients to function effectively in the labor market by placing them in on-the-job training, work training programs, or work experience projects.

A necessary element of this important Work Incentive Program is a statewide program for the day care of children, as required by the 1967 amendments to the Social Security Act. New Jersey's goal in this respect must be not the provision of mere baby-sitting or custodial care, but the development of supportive services that will enable children, like their parents who are equipping themselves for work, to break free of the welfare cycle.

GARNISHMENT

It is both illogical and inequitable to maintain a system which in the past has operated to penalize the poverty-stricken and preclude them from any opportunity to regain solvency. Today I also urge passage of a bill now before you to increase the amount of wages exempt from garnishment from the level of \$18 a week, established in 1915, to an amount consistent with today's economy and income standards. These Measures, designated as Assembly Bills Nos. 485 and 474, deserve your careful scrutiny and prompt passage.

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